



St. Andrew's Tidings

Week of Dec. 11

Advent III

Isaiah 35: 1-10 Matthew 11-2-11

The readings this Sunday continue to focus on the promises of God's future, with John the Baptist once again a central figure in the Gospel passage. John had emerged from the Judean desert preaching a fiery message of repentance in preparation for the coming of Jesus. But John has been arrested and imprisoned by Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, for denouncing the legitimacy of his marriage to his brother's wife.

As the Gospel for this Sunday begins, John the Baptist sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus whether or not he is "the one who is to come or are we to wait for another?" Earlier, when Jesus had come to John to be baptized, John had identified Jesus as the *one*. But now it would seem that he was no longer sure, for what he heard of Jesus' ministry did not conform to the message of *repentance* and *the wrath to come* that John expected.

Jesus does not directly confirm or deny his identity. Instead, he tells John's followers to report the acts of mercy, liberation, and healing they have seen and heard. In fulfillment of the Messianic expectations found in scripture, the dead are raised, and "the poor have good news brought to them."

However, Jesus was already aware that many would not accept his words and deeds. Thus he goes on to bless those who take "no offense at me"—those who do not *misunderstand* his ministry. As the gospel of Matthew repeatedly illustrates, such misplaced expectations by his followers and adversaries alike would ultimately lead to his rejection.

As John's disciples depart, Jesus turns to the crowd and begins to speak to them about John. He sees the Baptist as austere, resolute, and uncompromising—not like a reed that bends and changes direction with the wind. Nor is he like a spoiled prince lounging in his palace, as evidenced by his rough clothing and life in the wilderness.

John clearly is a prophet; indeed, he is "more than a prophet". He is the messenger foretold in the Scriptures who was to prepare the way for the Messiah.

However, despite his stature as the greatest prophet of his age, “the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” This statement is not a rebuke of John, but an indication of the radical and transformative nature of the age to come. Those in the Kingdom inaugurated by Jesus will be “greater” because they will have experienced the glory of god in the light of the Resurrection—an understanding of the future beyond anything John envisioned.

The entire Gospel story is an answer to John’s question. Thus, today we too are called to *tell out* the things we have seen and heard, and to do our part to *prepare the Lord’s way*. This sounds like evangelism to me!

Advent blessings,

*Margaret**

CURSILLO REUNION GROUP

PLEASE CONTACT SALLY BREWER IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN FORMING A CURSILLO REUNION GROUP. PHONE 270-305-6360 OR SALLYBREWER@YAHOO.COM

Congratulations to Nancy Young who was elected to a three year term on the Vestry; and Congratulations to Tom and Sally Brewer who were elected for a three year rotation as delegate and alternate to Diocesan Convention.

Minutes of the last Vestry Meeting are posted on the bulletin boards I in the Parish Hall, by the new narthex door, and the board in front of the office).

Christmas at St. Andrew's



Since Christmas falls on Sunday, your vestry has voted that there will be one service on that week-end, Christmas Eve at 5 p.m. Prior to that, there will be a gala Christmas reception in Byrne Hall before the service. We want to make sure that all who would like to attend will be able to, so we are renting a van to pick up those who might not like to drive. If you want to take advantage of the van, begin now to make reservations by calling the church Soon at 763-7636.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Baptismal Covenant 9:00 am

IMPORTANT DATES

LESSONS AND CAROLS

This Sunday, Dec. 11

5:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, DEC. 24:

THE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

4 P.M. GALA RECEPTION

5 P.M. FESTAL HOLY EUCHARIST

**Call the Church NOW if you would like a ride in
the van**

St. Mary's Guild

“Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa, la, la, la, lah”. Yes, ladies of St. Mary's it's time for our Christmas “sing around the piano”. Join us at Barbara Sontag's, 604 Baywood Drive, Lynn Haven on Tues. Dec. 13 at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a gift for a man and a woman for the nursing home. Hostesses are Mary Davenport and Mary Wimpenny.

Sunday is Rector's Discretionary, so please remember to be generous!

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

If you are still puzzling about what to give the person who has everything, how about a goat, 50 trees, or a smokeless stove? These gifts and many more are available at our Alternative Gift Fair. Cards are available to announce your gift. Episcopal Relief and Development has a donor who will match your gift so it will have a double impact.

This Christmas give a gift that can help transform a life and heal a hurting world. This is our final Sunday. The market will be available before and after the service and at Lessons and Carols.



OSL

The Order of St. Luke is reforming and will initially meet on Sunday, Jan. 5 after the service in the parish hall. We are welcoming new members if you are interested, please join us.

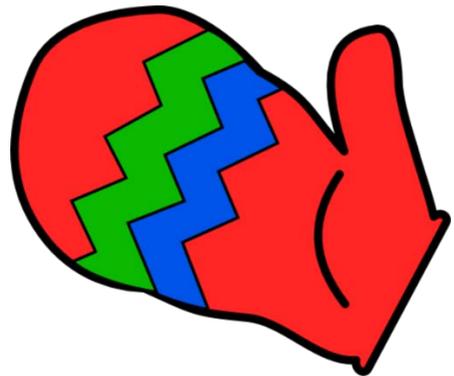
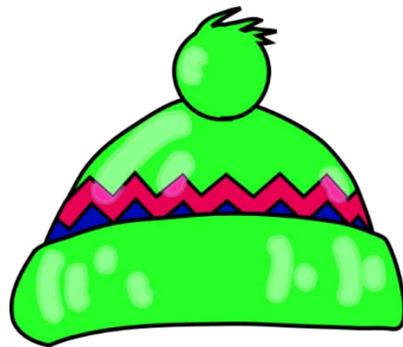
SOCKS, HATS & GLOVES

Each Christmas as a part of our Supper at Grace Ministry we collect new socks for men, women and children. For those living in cars or unheated shelter, cold feet are a major discomfort. Last year we also received gently used stocking caps, gloves and jackets which were received by our supper guests with much gratitude.

Thursday, December 15th is St. Andrew's turn to serve Supper at Grace. If you can help us warm up our guests with new socks and/or gently used caps or jackets, please bring them to Byrne Hall Sunday either in the morning or for Lessons and Carols in the afternoon and place them on the table by the bulletin board.

Thursday, December 15th will be a very busy day preparing to serve supper, pack lunches and wrap socks for that evening. Men's, women's and children's socks are needed.

We will begin preparation at 9:00 AM in Byrne Hall. Any help is greatly needed and appreciated. Choice of jobs available: wrappers, sandwich makers, and food prep! For more details, please contact Teri Floore or Diane Tate.



(Names are left on the prayer list for 3 weeks, unless specified for a longer time)

Please keep the following in your prayers: Bob, Virginia, Mike, Warren, Ed, Nell, Sandra, Margaret & Bill, Dr. Benton, Lou, Paul, Debra, Dawn, George, Paul, Donna, Robbie, John, Bob, Patricia, Jeremy, Gene, Kathy, Pam, Judy, Ransom, Janice, Mike, Elizabeth, Marcella, Ryan, Hank, Mason, Dawn, Rick, Terry, Sue, Michael, John, Lauren, Liam, Dee, Sandra, Mason, Sandy, Josh, Marcella, Elizabeth, Donna, Bobbie, Ken, Meagan, Rick, James, Eric, Crystal, Ally, Rita, Cynthia, Brian, Ray, Carol, Charlie

We pray for our men and women in the Armed Forces at home and abroad:

David, Jason, Billy, Colin, Todd, Jordan, Jeremiah, Richard, Ivan, James